(12) The vice of using tobacco and other intoxicants had become very prevalent amongst the student population and was assuming dangerous proportions. In Mysore and Baroda, the habit had been authoritatively prohibited. The Government should discourage and, if possible, eradicate the vice by introducing a penal provision either in the Education Code or in the Penal Code.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

114. Suggestion as to how the existing facilities can be increased and obstacles removed in regard to education.

Mr. K. C. Mamman Mappila (Member, Kottayam taluk) spoke at the outset about the difficulties confronting the Education Department at the present time and said that they were rather the ruinous legacy bestowed upon the Director of Public Instruction by his predecessor. The present difficulties of the department and the financial embarrassment of the Government so far as the Education Budget was concerned were the irresistible consequences of the policy inaugurated by Dr. Mitchell, who signally failed to understand the needs of the country and the aspirations of its people ; and the same policy was pursued and persisted in by the Government at the instance of the masterful personality of Dr. Mitchell but in defiance of the unanimous protest of the people. The protest first emanated from the proprietors and managers of Private Schools over whom the Education Code hung like the sword of Damocles threatening them with extinction. The Private Schools were the result of years of patient labour and enormous expenditure and the attempt of the Code and of its authors to accomplish the absolute effacement of such institutions from the State was an act of retrogression calculated to dry up the springs of indigenous activity and to obliterate a factor of no mean importance which more than supplemented the activities of the State for the educational regeneration and upliftment of the people. The problem of the present day, which was the inevitable consequence of the said Code and which stared the Government in the face, was how to curtail the growing expenditure on education—an expenditure which, in the long run, unless the present policy was modified, would permanently cripple the resources of the State. Yet the chief evils to combat which all the revolutionary changes and serious financial commitments were undertaken—the over-crowding in schools and the consequent deterioration in teaching and insufficient accommodation—were still more rampant at the present moment than at the time of the inception of the Code. The fundamental mistake committed by the authors of the Code was that they failed to perceive the important role which private enterprise played in the educational activity of the country. The result was that, in the enforcement of the provisions of the Code, private enterprise was practically throttled and all educational institutions became departmentalised. The tendency to departmentalise such institutions was perceptible even at the present day, as the old policy was still avowedly followed. The means whereby the institutions in question were sought to be departmentalised or extinguished were as follows :—

(1) Existing buildings and their equipments which were provided on the lines laid down by the department before the promulgation of the Code, were condemned wholesale. New models beyond the resources of most managers were laid down and scarcely any time was allowed to work up to them.

(2) Schools were also condemned and abolished on the ground of their proximity to burial grounds, although they were originally constructed with the permission of the department and although there was no evidence that such proximity had any deleterious effect on the health of the school-children.

The most unreasonable part of the transaction was that the above objection prevailed, irrespective of the real utility of the schools concerned.

(3) Impossible conditions were laid down as to the qualifications of teachers.

(4) The number of students to be admitted into each class was restricted and the rule was rigorously enforced.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

(5) It was made a practical impossibility to obtain any grant-in-aid. There was such inordinate delay and unreasonable deductions that the utility of the grants wherever given was nullified.

(6) There was no conceivable uniformity in the treatment accorded to different schools.

Any violation of the provisions of the Code was always met with the severest punishment, and every inducement was held out to Private Schools to become Departmental Schools. The Member cited the instances of the English Schools at Pala and Alwaye in illustration of the above tendency. While Private Schools were subjected to the most rigorous and unequal pressure, the Departmental Schools, the Member observed, were being conducted in complete defiance of all the provisions of the Code. The evils of the Private Schools which the Code and the department condemned were seen hundredfold in Departmental Schools. The condition of the Departmental Schools led people to believe that the deliberate policy of the Government was to smother private enterprise in education altogether and that belief had since frozen the private educational activity in the State.

Before proceeding to the changes necessary in the Education Department, he gratefully recognised a good number of beneficial measures recently introduced into the department by the Government. The first was the order permitting the introduction of trained under-graduates as teachers in classes up to the Third Form in Lower Grade Secondary Schools, instead of graduates—a change which meant an annual saving of about two lakhs of rupees in the Educational Budget. The decision to separate the lower from the higher classes in Elementary Schools, and to leave the duty of finding accommodation for the former to the people themselves was also a very desirable change. The other useful measures were the abolition of the moderation of marks and of the public service endorsements in the School Leaving Certificates, and the revival of the Higher Vernacular Examination, though in a restricted form. In regard to the School Leaving Certificates, however, he suggested the need for passing a rule giving the men holding certificates without the endorsement, under the old system, equal treatment with the new certificate-holders. His contention was that the absence of the endorsement in the past should not operate as a bar to entertainment in the public service, as the system itself had been done away with.

The Member next proceeded to discuss the various reforms, which, in his opinion, should be introduced into the department and mentioned the following as the more important changes : —

(1) The period of training of Elementary School teachers should be reduced from two years to one year. Two years was a needlessly long period and was quite unnecessary, as the teachers were called upon to teach only the lower classes.

Dewan.—I may tell you that the question is now engaging the attention of the Government.

The Member requested that the fact that there existed such an opinion in the country might also be considered in settling the question. He added that his proposal would also be a means of retrenching expenditure.

(2) He next pleaded for more considerate treatment being accorded to Private Aided Schools in the matter of awarding grants for teachers, buildings and equipment, and also in the mode of calculating them. As already stated by him, Private Schools were playing an important part in the field of education. As regards English education, there was at least an equal, if not greater, number of Private Schools in the country, as compared with Departmental Schools, and the net average cost per pupil in the former was Re. 1–18chs.–11 c. against Rs. 7–27 chs.–15 c. in the latter. That single circumstance should be enough to induce the Government to show greater sympathy towards Private Schools. Further, in the Private Schools, there was always a greater personal supervision on the part of the Managers than was possible in a departmental school. Much more liberal grants should therefore be

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

given to those schools, of course without prejudice to efficiency which should be strictly maintained. The rules laid down in the Education Code for the calculation of grants were unduly severe on the Aided School Managers. The grants were to be based upon the difference between the estimated income and expenditure of the schools, and a portion was set off as the Manager's contribution. Large sums of money had been spent by the Managers as initial outlay on the buildings, and that was not taken note of in making the calculations. He suggested that the interest on the initial outlay should itself be considered as the Manager's contribution and liberal grants allowed without making unnecessary reductions.

(3) The rigid provisions of the Code in the matter of buildings also imposed great hardship on the Managers, and severely impeded the spread of education in the country. In his opinion, it was quite unnecessary to insist on high walls, tiled roofs and ceiling for such buildings. A building with a strong room at one end of it and with substantial roofs or pillars should be quite sufficient both for the Departmental and Private Schools. The building regulations should be suitably modified.

(4) The number of Departmental Higher Grade Secondary Schools was unduly large, particularly in Central Travancore. It was time that the Government made a comprehensive survey of the needs in that respect in different parts of the country and decided once for all in which places there should be H. G. S. Schools and what amounts they would allot for the same. Such a step would also put an end to the undue pressure brought on the Government every year by the Assembly in the matter.

(5) The grants allowed to Elementary School teachers in Private Schools should be the same as in the Departmental Schools. If complete equality could not be maintained, there should at least be a greater approximation of the one to the other.

(6) The introduction of *free* primary education in the State was a disastrous mistake. Considering the fact that the Government was not able to find accommodation for *all* the children that were already knocking at their doors, the Member thought that such an additional inducement was unnecessary and premature. Further, the advantage gained by the remission of the fees in the primary classes was more than counterbalanced by the numerous and costly text-books introduced into the classes. A large number of people, including the members of the Text-book Committee, were writing any number of books and most of the books were indiscriminately prescribed as text-books. Some of them were full of grammatical blunders or were otherwise unsuitable. The prices put on them were prohibitive, and the authors became rich, unfortunately at the expense of the poor school-children. The subject of text-books was therefore one which demanded the earnest and immediate consideration of the Government.

(7) English and Sanskrit should be introduced as optional subjects in the Higher Vernacular Schools, and a teacher for each of the subjects appointed in those schools. In the present day, some smattering knowledge of English was necessary for every one and to acquire that, it was not necessary to go through a regular course in the English Schools. As for Sanskrit, a knowldge of the rudiments of it was essential for a study of Malayalam.

Dewan.—At the instance of the Director, the Government are now considering the question of introducing English as an optional subject in the Higher Vernacular Schools.

(8) The Student's Hostel maintained by the Government was not open to all classes. The Christian students felt it as a real grievance. The institution should be thrown open to all, without distinction of caste or creed.

Dewan's reply.—The suggestions made by the Member will receive careful consideration.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly